

REMARKS

Claim 1 is amended herein to recite that the binder polymer has a weight average molecular weight in the range of 20,000 to 2000,000. New claims 19 and 20 are added which are also directed to the weight average molecular weight of the binder polymer. Support for the Amendment is found, for example on page 42, lines 2 to 8, tables 1 to 4 on page 46 and Tables 6 to 8 on pages 151 to 153 of the original specification. No new matter is presented.

Accordingly, upon entry of the Amendment, claims 1-4 and 12-20 will be all of the claims pending in the application.

I. Response to Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 2, 4 and 12-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Aoai in view of Fujimaki and Aoshima.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and submit that the cited references do not teach or suggest the presently claimed invention. Specifically, independent claim 1 is amended to recite the weight average molecular weight of the binder polymer in the range of 20,000 to 200,000. Although Aoai et al (USP No. 6,824,948) generally teaches using a resin having a molecular weight of 1,000 to 200,000, the working examples of Aoai disclose using a resin having a molecular weight in a range of 9,100 to 16,700 (see line 33 in column 75 to line 62 in column 77 of Aoai), which is outside the scope of the weight average molecular weight of the resin used in the claimed composition of the present invention. As described on page 42, at lines 5 to 8 of the specification of the present application, when the weight average molecular weight is too low, the cured film is insufficient.

Further, in response to the §103(a) rejection against claim 18 directed to the negative-working planographic printing plate precursor of the present invention, Applicants note that the disclosure of Aoai and the disclosure of Aoshima et al (USP No. 6,838,222) and/or Fujimaki et al (6,916,595) cannot be combined because they belong to different technical fields, i. e., the references are non-analogous art. Namely, Aoai teaches a resist composition for forming a semiconductor, while Aoshima and Fujimaki teach compositions for a planographic printing plate precursor. Thus, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to combine the references with a reasonable expectation of success in achieving the presently claimed invention.

Specifically, since film strength is important in the technical field of printing plate precursors to obtain printing durability of a printing plate, the polymerized composition of the present invention uses a resin having a large molecular weight as claimed. In contrast, film strength is not required in the technical field of resist compositions for forming a semiconductor as in Aoai. Thus, the problem to be solved by the present invention is not the same as in the field of resist compositions for forming a semiconductor. Thus, there is no motivation for one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the references to arrive at the claimed invention. Accordingly, the presently claimed invention is not rendered obvious by the cited references, whether taken alone or in combination.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the obviousness rejection.

II. Objection

The Examiner has objected to claim 3 as being dependent on a rejected base claim.

Applicants submit that the base claim should not be rejected for the reasons set forth above, and thus this objection is overcome. Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,


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